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The Museum of Early Southern
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Figure 1. "The Sacrifice of Isaac" worked in silk tent stitch upon silk canvas of approximately 38 to 40 threads per inch. Embroidered inscription beneath the picture states that "Elizth Boush Workd this Peice at E. Gardners 1768 9" Elizabeth Boush lived in Norfolk, Virginia, and her needlework appears to be the only Southern colonial embroidery known to have been made at a specific school. Approximately 19½ x 11½ inches.
Collection of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts.

For Persons of Fortune Who Have Taste: An Elegant Schoolgirl Embroidery

BETTY RING

E. ARMSTON (or perhaps better known by the Name of GARDNER) continues the School at *Point Pleaſant*, *Norfolk* Borough, where is a large and convenient Houſe proper to accommodate young Ladies as Boarders; at which School is taught Petit Point in Flowers, Fruit, Landſcapes, and Sculpture, Nuns Work, Embroidery in Silk, Gold, Silver, Pearls, or emboſſed, Shading of all Kinds, in the various Works in Vogue, *Dreſden* Point Work, Lace Ditto, Catgut in different Modes, flouriſhing Muſlin, after the neweſt Taſte, and moſt elegant Pattern, Waxwork in Figure, Fruit, or Flowers, Shell Ditto, or groteſque, Painting in Water Colours and Mezzotinto; alſo the Art of taking off Foliage, with ſeveral other Embelliſhments neceſſary for the Amuſement of Perſons of Fortune who have Taſte. Specimens of the Subſcriber's Work may be ſeen at her Houſe, as alſo of her Scholars; having taught ſeveral Years in *Norfolk*, and elſe where, to general Satisfaction. She flatters herſelf that thoſe Gentlemen and Ladies who have hitherto employed her will grant her their farther Indulgence, as no Endeavours ſhall be wanting to complete what is above mentioned, with a ſtrict Attention to the Behaviour of thoſe Ladies intruſted to her Care.

Reading will be her peculiar Care; Writing and Arithmetick will be taught by a Maſter properly qualified; and, if deſired, will engage Proficients in Muſick and Dancing.

This extravagant advertisement of a colonial girls' school appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* of February 20, 1772, and it has attracted the attention of historians for half a century or

more;[1] but the "embellishments" that E. Armston proposed to produce for "the amusement of persons of fortune who have taste" have been unknown to their posterity. It is therefore exciting to report that the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts has recently acquired a canvas-work Biblical embroidery which is clearly identified in stitchery with the words "Elizth Boush Work d this Peice at E. Gardners 1768 9" (Fig. 1).

This small needlework picture, in rather poor condition, would warrant little attention but for the inscription which lifts it from oblivion to a position of importance among surviving colonial textiles. Although there are, indeed, a number of New England embroideries which predate it, beginning with Rebecca Wheeler's needlework view of Queen Esther and King Ahasuerus worked in 1664,[2] this Virginia rendition of "The Sacrifice of Isaac" appears to be the only needlework picture which is clearly identified as having been made at a specific girls' school in British colonial America.[3]

The seventeenth century was the period when amateur embroidery of a purely pictorial nature reached its peak of popularity in England but it is logical that little attention was devoted to such luxuries during the first rugged years of English colonization in America.[4] Pictorial embroideries were, in fact, the peculiar province of the girls' school, and the vast quantity of such work made between 1640 and 1840 was almost entirely the product of school instruction.

The high standard for women's education which was achieved in England during the Elizabethan era declined under James I and more so during the Puritan dominance of the Reformation. Nevertheless, instruction in ornamental needlework flourished with fascinating vigor and thrived particularly with the restoration of Charles II. This was the golden age of naive pictorial embroideries by English schoolgirls. Their needlework pictures had an exuberance and spontaneity which were never again equaled in England, but their appealing qualities may be compared to the delightful originality and naivete found in American schoolgirl needlework of the Federal period, even though the styles of embroidery are otherwise totally different.

By the early eighteenth century the prospering American colonies were better able to indulge in the luxuries of more female education and household decoration. Schools of all types appeared in increasing numbers. Teachers newly arrived

from abroad advertised their services in newspapers of the major colonial towns, and none were more numerous than those offering instruction in the ornamental needle arts.[5]

Figure 2. "The Sacrifice of Isaac" worked almost entirely with twisted silk upon ivory satin. At the top in red cross stitches is the name "M. Hull" and the date "Feb 16th 1733." This needlework may be of New England origin although New England schoolgirls obviously favored bucolic scenes over Biblical subjects, and a wealth of mid-eighteenth pastoral embroideries survive from that region. Here the basic design was probably derived from the Bernard Salomon woodcut of 1553 (Fig. 7). This embroidery is the subject of an article by Gertrude Townsend in American Collector, May 1943.
Satin, long and short, oriental, stem, and cross stitches. 19½ x 18½ inches. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 3. "The Sacrifice of Isaac" embroidered by an unknown English girl, circa 1660. Probably one hundred years earlier than the work of Elizabeth Boush, this piece represents the prevailing style of embroidery during England's most prolific period of pictorial needlework. Biblical subjects were exceedingly popular with the Stuart embroideress and it was quite typical to clothe the central figures in contemporary garments and to crowd them with designs from nature in disproportionate array. Silk tent stitch and couching on canvas. 15 x 11¼ inches (framed). Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Elizabeth Boush's needlework picture of Abraham and Isaac is so closely related to English embroideries of the mid-eighteenth century that we would have no suspicion of its colonial origin if it bore no specific identification. Its style reflects the naturalism in composition which came into favor early in the eighteenth century and which is also evident in a "Sacrifice of Isaac" worked in 1733 (Fig. 2). Both of these embroideries reveal a departure from the English style of the seventeenth century seen in Fig. 3. This "Sacrifice of Isaac" exemplifies that "horror of empty space"[6] which characterized Jacobean decoration, and clothing Abraham as a Cavalier was also typical of the period.

Due to its pleasing proportions and exquisite shading, Elizabeth Boush's embroidery is less provincial in feeling than an English rendition of the same subject worked in 1778 (Fig. 4). In fact, its style and design seem considerably more abreast of current fashion than a contemporary pastoral view done at an English boarding school (Fig. 5). A comparison of these pieces reminds us of how seldom we can depend solely on style or technique when trying to assign an English or American origin to needlework of this period.[7] In this case, both the flawless execution and the elegant materials tend to belie a Virginia history. We are inclined to associate perfection with the relentless discipline of the English schoolmistress,[8] and the carefully blended colors, particularly in the foreground of this piece, reveal a luxurious variety of shaded cottons and an artistic skill in combining them.

Elizabeth worked her picture entirely in cotton petit point, and it is surprising to find that E. Gardner Armston's 1772 advertisement included this now familiar term rather than the more common allusion to tent stitch or tent work. However, the most extraordinary feature of Elizabeth's embroidery is its ground material. Instead of the usual linen canvas, careful analysis has revealed that she stitched her picture upon an evenly woven silk textile of 38-40 threads per inch. She completely covered her ground material, including the selvage edges, and she must have finished with her inscription and the date. At that time there was a growing tendency to include the name of the school with the signature of the embroideress,[9] but her manner of dating was atypical.

Figure 4

Perhaps she wished to indicate that two years had been devoted to this accomplishment.

The custom of working tent stitch in horizontal rows may have caused the diagonal stretching now evident in Elizabeth's needlework. Proper blocking should have corrected this when the piece was completed, but this shape could have reoccurred, and particularly if the picture was not squarely secured in a frame. There is, however, nothing to indicate that it was ever framed except the softened hues of its many colors which suggest some exposure to light. Quite possibly it was removed from a frame in later years, and the breaks in the material probably resulted from folding.

Biblical embroideries were particularly popular with English schoolgirls throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the custom of depicting episodes from the Old Testament reflected a stress on the second commandment brought about by the Reformation. Embroidered versions of Christ, the Virgin, or the saints were strictly forbidden, but the familiar figures of earlier Bible stories were quite acceptable. Enduring favorites for interpretation in needlework were Adam and Eve, Abraham and Hagar, the Sacrifice of Isaac, David and Bathsheba, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Susannah and the Elders, and Esther and Ahasuerus.[10]

The "Sacrifice of Isaac" embroidered by Elizabeth Boush was probably derived from an engraving published by Gerard de Jode in the *Thesaurus Sacrarum Historiarum Veteris Testamenti* in Antwerp in 1585 (Fig. 6). This volume became an important design source for needlework, as did the woodcuts of Bernard Salomon in *Quadrins historiques de la Bible* which was published by Jean de Tournes of Lyons in 1553 and copied in many languages (Fig. 7). In spite of the enormous time gap, sixteenth-century Bible illustrations influenced the

---

Figure 4. "The Sacrifice of Isaac" in an English needlework picture signed "E W" and dated "1778". Here the embroideress identified her Biblical episode with an appropriate verse from the Bible (Genesis 22:10). This composition is believed to be derived from Gerard de Jode's Thesaurus Sacrarum (Fig. 6). This and other English Biblical embroideries are featured in an article by Lynn E. Springer in The Magazine Antiques of February 1972.
Silk on tabby weave linen; primarily tent stitch with satin and long-and-short stitches. 9 x 8 inches.
McDonnell Collection, St. Louis Art Museum.

Figure 5. English needlework picture of a harvest scene worked in the same year that Elizabeth Boush completed her Biblical embroidery (Fig. 1) and signed in a similar manner. Here the embroidered inscription reads: "Eleanor Mattick done at Mrs. Roscos Boarding School March 1769". Beginning in the seventeenth century, English schoolgirls occasionally included the name of their instructress on their signed embroideries. From the late eighteenth century until the close of the schoolgirl needlework era, they often named their school. If undated, this piece would probably be assigned an earlier eighteenth century date, for it lacks the delicacy of design found in Elizabeth Boush's work, and it bears no hint of forthcoming neoclassicism. Wool and silk on canvas; tent stitch, Irish stitch and couching, 23 x 19½ inches.
Courtesy, Benjamin Ginsburg, Antiquary.

Figure 6. "Sacrifice of Isaac" from the Thesaurus Sacrarum Historiarum Veteris Testamenti, (Vol. I, page 25), published by Gerard de Jode, Antwerp, 1585. These Bible illustrations by Flemish artists greatly influenced the compositions of English embroideries throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The engraving pictured here was most likely the source from which the Elizabeth Boush embroidery was ultimately derived. Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

patterns of Biblical embroideries throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[11] Over the years the principal elements of the compositions were rearranged in numerous ways. In fact, the needleworker quite possibly might never have seen the original print, but perhaps composed her embroidery from another piece which had likewise evolved from a series of previous adaptations.

Elizabeth's teacher, Elizabeth Gardner Armston, may have had prints or sample designs from which she created patterns for her students. It is also likely that English sources of printed and tinted textiles for needlework were known to her,[12] or she

could have employed a pattern drawer. In 1784, Richard Morris, then in Richmond, advertised his services as an *"EMBROIDERER, TAMBOUR WORKER, and PATTERN DRAWER, lately arrived from LONDON."*[13] With the many ships arriving in Norfolk, there were doubtless other itinerants offering these talents at an earlier date.[14] On the other hand, many Virginians had fine libraries and good art collections in which Elizabeth

GENESIS XXII.

Abraham willeth for to pleaſe godes highnes,
Of his deare ſonne to make immolation:
But god knowing his wount true righteouſnes,
Maketh him to leaue ſuche an execution.

Figure 7. "Sacrifice of Isaac" from a woodcut by Bernard Salomon as it appears in The true and lyvely historyke purtreatures of the Woll Bible. This is the English version of Jean de Tournes' Quadrins historiques de la Bible published in Lyons in 1553, and it contains Pierre Derendel's translations of the original quatrains by Claude Paradin. When illustrated books became widely available in the 16th century, they formed a popular source for embroidery designs and the publications of Jean de Tournes of Lyons were among the most influential.
By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Boush could have found her own inspiration for embroideries. Before 1728, her kinsman, Colonel Maxmilian Boush, owned an impressive assortment of portraits and prints,[15] and in 1745 William Dering of Williamsburg owned forty-four pictures and about two hundred prints.[16]

Elizabeth Boush belonged to a well established and influential Virginia family. The daughter of Samuel Boush III, she was born in Norfolk or on one of her father's nearby plantations about the year 1753. Elizabeth's ancestors were among the first settlers in the region which became known as Lower Norfolk County in 1637. Among them were Francis Bacon, who came to Virginia on the *John and Francis* in 1613, and Henry Seawell, who was living in Elizabeth City in 1630. Their granddaughter, Ann Mason, married Samuel Boush I,[17] who served briefly as the first Mayor of the Borough of Norfolk before his death in 1736.[18]

In his will, Samuel Boush I devised the bulk of his considerable estate to Samuel Boush III, who was the eldest of his three grandsons.[19] Following his marriage in about 1748, Samuel Boush III also shared in the estate of his father, who died in 1756. Elizabeth was the third of Samuel's four children and his only daughter.

Within the same year that Elizabeth finished her needlework picture, her portrait was painted by John Durand (Fig. 8).[20] Elizabeth posed in a turquoise blue dress trimmed in white lace.[21] Her necklace and earrings, (shown in the portrait and which still survive) are smoothly polished pale aquamarines mounted in gold filigree, and the necklace is tied with a ribbon matching the color of her dress, as do the feathers in her hair. The delicate flowers above her brow, the rosy flower at her bosom, and the beribboned, rose-colored garland in her hands may exemplify her skill in making "artificial flowers" or the "Art of taking off Foilage" as described by her schoolmistress.

Elizabeth Boush was married on November 28, 1772,[22] and the *Virginia Gazette* noted the union of "Champion Travis, Esq. Representative for Jamestown, to Miss Betsy Boush of Norfolk, Daughter of Mr. Samuel Boush, Clerk of that County and Borough."[23]

Elizabeth's husband, like her father and grandfathers, was active in the civic affairs of Virginia. They lived in his father's old homestead on Jamestown Island, and Champion Travis was a Burgess until he became a representative at the revolu-

tionary conventions. He later became a colonel in the state regiment, a naval commissioner, a justice, sheriff, etc.[24]

Elizabeth Boush and Champion Travis had three daughters and four sons. Their daughter Susan married the well-known agriculturist, Edmund Ruffin.[25] The four sons were named in the will of their grandfather, which was written in 1779, and to his daughter, Elizabeth Travis, Samuel Boush III devised one thousand pounds and two Negro women.[26]

Samuel Boush III died in 1784. He had been an active supporter of the Revolution, and his participation, along with the devastation of Norfolk, divested him of much of his fortune. Among many other services, it was he who removed the *Records of Norfolk County* to safety before they could be destroyed by the British.[27]

Neither did the property of Champion and Elizabeth Travis go unscathed during the early hostilities. The *Virginia Gazette* reported that on Thursday, November 16, 1775, a British man-of-war "fired a few shot at Col. Travis' houses at Jamestown one which went through the kitchen chimney."[28]

Some time later the Travis family moved to Williamsburg,[29] and on October 6, 1797, Champion Travis purchased a house from Robert Andrews which is the present Travis House belonging to the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. The death of Elizabeth Boush Travis is unrecorded, but the home in Williamsburg is known to have become the property of Samuel Travis after the death of his father, Champion Travis,[30] on August 22, 1810.[31]

There is scant evidence of the first schools in Norfolk and no record of Elizabeth Boush's earliest education. Quite possibly her first instruction was similar to that of a contemporary Norfolk girl who has left a revealing account of her youth.[32] Helen Calvert Maxwell was born in Norfolk on June 20, 1750 and her memoirs relate that she attended the dame school of a Mrs. Drudge.

> . . . To be sure she did drudge to teach me my letters . . . spelling and reading after a fashion. . . . She taught me, good soul, to read the Bible and the stories in it pleased me greatly. I remember, particularly, the story of good old Isaac and his sons. . . . After I had learned out here, I was sent to a Mrs.

Figure 8. Elizabeth Boush by John Durand, 1769. This elegantly garbed sixteen-year-old daughter of Samuel Boush III posed for her portrait within the same year that she completed her Biblical embroidery at E. Gardner's School in Norfolk, Virginia. The flowers shown here probably represent more handiwork made under the instruction of E. Gardner. The schoolmistress mentioned "artificial flowers" among the many "embellishments" she proposed to teach, and "flowers for the head" were often mentioned in advertisements 18th century girls' schools.
Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 inches. Private Collection.

> Johnson. . . . She taught me needlework and marking on the sampler.
>
> After this, as I was shooting up, my father, who thought me a very fine smart girl, wished to send me to a fashionable boarding school that there was then in Williamsburg, but my mother would not consent.
>
> . . . Shortly afterwards Donald Campbell imported a schoolmaster from Scotland, by the name of Buchan,[33] who opened a select school and I was sent to him to learn the higher branches. . . . Here perhaps I might have learned something, but I was in my teens, and too fond of talking and doing nothing to get my lessons, and my teacher used to humour me and spoil me. So my education was very imperfect, and I have always regretted that my opportunities for learning were so poor . . . though I must confess that I might have improved them better than I did.

Except for the teachers mentioned by Helen Calvert Maxwell, there is nothing to indicate what educational opportunities were available to girls in Norfolk before the following advertisement of March 21, 1766.

> *The Subscriber begs leave to inform the publick that she has taken a house in Norfolk borough, for the accomodating young Ladies as boarders: where are taught the following things, viz. Embroidery, tent work, nuns do. queenstitch, Irish do. and all kinds of shading; also point, Dresden lace work, catgut, & c. Shell work, wan work, and artificial flowers.*
> *No endeavors will be wanting to complete them in any or all of the above particulars, to the satisfaction of those Gentlemen and Ladies that may please to commit their children to the care of*
>
> *Their humble servant,*
> *E. Gardner*
>
> *N.B. She professes teaching the French language.*[34]

Here was a boarding school primarily dedicated to teaching the ornamental needle arts. These accomplishments were the criteria of a finished education for the young gentlewoman throughout the seventeenth century and the custom continued

despite the hue and cry of the intellectuals during the Age of Enlightenment.

In 1720 Daniel Defoe deplored the fact that women's "youth is spent to teach them to stitch and sew, or make baubles. They are taught to read, indeed, and perhaps to write their names, or so; and that is the height of a woman's education."[35] In the 1740s, a writer in *The Female Spectator* decried the custom of "compelling young ladies of fortune to make so much use of their needle, as they did in former days. . . . It makes me smile when I hear mothers of fine daughters say 'I always keep my girls at their needle.' "[36] *The Spectator* carried the comments of Addison who belittled the "employment and diversions of the Fair Ones. . . . Their more serious Occupations are Sowing and Embroidery and their greatest Drudgery the Preparation of Jellies and Sweetmeats."[37]

From England this criticism spread to America and in 1787 Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia felt that it was "incumbent upon us to make ornamental accomplishments yield to principles and knowledge in the education of our women."[38] His sentiments were echoed a generation later by Timothy Dwight of Yale.[39]

These were, however, mere ripples of displeasure upon the sea of established custom. The vogue for teaching ornamental arts continued undiminished until its demise was brought about by the upheaval of the industrial revolution, rather than the liberal thinkers.

Particularly in the South, proficiency in the graces of life was considered essential for gentlemen's daughters. While the Sage of Monticello fostered advancements in education and encouraged his Martha to master her Livy, he also reminded her that "In the country life of America there are many moments when a woman can have recourse to nothing but her needle for employment."[40] One of Thomas Jefferson's descendants said "Very little from books was thought necessary for a girl. She was trained to domestic matters . . . the accomplishments of the day . . . to play upon the harpsichord or spinet, and to work impossible dragons and roses on canvas."[41]

Thus, the appearance of Elizabeth Gardner in Norfolk may have been a boon to those parents who wished to have their daughters properly "finished" without sending them far from home. The absence of any other important girls' school in the vicinity may have led Elizabeth Gardner to choose Norfolk as

a likely place for a fashionable boarding school. Certainly it was not a typical Virginia town, although it was the largest one in the colony. It was a bustling commercial port of close to six thousand people, many of whom were tradespeople and transients representing companies abroad.[42]

Where Elizabeth Gardner was born and educated and why she established herself as a schoolmistress in Norfolk are all unknown. She evidently devoted herself to teaching rather than combining this with other efforts to secure a livelihood as was often the case. For instance, in sophisticated Charleston, among the first to advertise a school for young ladies was Mrs. Phillipene Henning. In 1734 she offered to teach "French and English, also all sorts of Needlework to perfection. She also makes and dresses all sorts of Head-cloths after the nicest fashion."[43] In a similar vein, John Walker, a schoolmaster "LATELY arriv'd in Williamsburg from London," advertised his services in 1752 and mentioned that Mrs. Walker "teaches young Ladies all Kinds of Needle Work; makes Capuchins, Shades, Hats and Bonnets."[44] It does, in fact, appear that teaching young ladies was often an additional effort of the milliner, seamstress, or hairdresser.

Elizabeth Gardner's advertisement of 1766 suggests that she commenced teaching in Norfolk at that time, and possibly she came from Scotland as a member of one of the many merchant families who settled there. If so, however, it seems unusual that she failed to advertise her recent arrival with a knowledge of all the latest styles and newest patterns from abroad, for this was invariably enticing to colonial patrons. In her advertisement of 1772, she mentioned teaching "elsewhere" but apparently she did not feel that specifying her previous location would add prestige to her current pursuits. The subjects she listed, and the confidence she evinced in offering them, hardly suggest a young provincial maiden. Yet the various arts she proposed to teach had all been taught in the colonies for at least a decade if not much longer,[45] so it was not impossible that she learned her skills in America.

The location of Elizabeth Gardner's school in Norfolk is unknown; she never purchased property, and there is scarcely a trace of her presence there. In March of 1769 she went to court to recover a debt due to her from the estate of Robert Tucker,[46] and on November 25, 1769, she married a merchant named Freer Armston.[47]

Freer Armston, the son of William and Ann Freer Armston, was born in Blaby, Leicestershire, England in 1738.[48] In 1765 he sailed for America with nearly four hundred pounds of goods,[49] and he established himself as a merchant and soap boiler on Church Street in Norfolk.[50] He was obviously extending his business in April of 1769 when a newspaper notice stated that "Freer Armston, Chandler and Soap Boiler in Norfolk, For the better convenience of supplying the town of Williamsburg, has opened a Shop between Mr. Carter's great brick house and Mrs. Rathell's, where may be had TALLOW CANDLES as Good as any on the continent." He also mentioned that he had "WEST INDIA and DRY GOODS at the lowest prices for ready money."[51]

Evidently Armston and his wife prospered. In 1771 his tithables were himself, an indentured servant boy,[52] a Negro named Sue, and one chair. It was the following February when Elizabeth Armston composed the lengthy advertisement about her school at Point Pleasant, but this location cannot be determined today.

Nothing further reveals their activities or attitudes until March of 1774 when Armston ran a notice in the Gazette stating that "The Subscriber intending to leave the Colony for a few months, requests the Favour of those indebted to him to settle their Accounts immediately," etc.[53] This was the typical forerunner of the departure of the alarmed Loyalist on the eve of the Revolution.

Armston was, indeed, a Loyalist. In fact, Norfolk was the stronghold of the Tories in southeastern Virginia, for the many Scottish merchants who lived there had never intended becoming permanent residents of the colony.[54] With other Tories who were driven from their Norfolk homes in December of 1775, the Armstons sought refuge with Lord Dunmore and the British fleet. At this time they had a fourteen-month-old girl, and Elizabeth was "then Big with Child."[55] The Loyalists and slaves who joined the royal governor suffered bitter deprivations; provisions were scarce and disease became rampant.[56] Elizabeth must have had her child under these difficult circumstances, for they continued with the fleet until they reached Bermuda in July of 1776. However, Armston could not support his family there, so they went to England, arriving on August 26, 1777, and they were received in Leicester by friends who had known them in Norfolk.[57]

William Armston died at Blaby in September of 1777, and in his will he left one hundred pounds to his son Freer.[58] This must have been welcome assistance, for Armston claimed that his losses in Virginia amounted to £1,001, and for the following nine years he sought compensation from the British government.[59] Armston had owned no land in Virginia, but he cited the loss of Negroes, working tools, household goods and uncollected accounts. Samuel Boush and other prominent Norfolk names were among his long list of debtors.

The very appearance of Elizabeth Boush's embroidery arouses fresh speculation concerning the long observed absence of any homogeneous "school" of Southern needlework comparable to the easily recognizable forms which developed in New England and the Middle Colonies in the mid-eighteenth century.[60] The dearth of such Southern embroideries has piqued the curiosity of scholars, perplexed Southerners, and vexed collectors for many years, but no satisfactory explanations have been found. A climate unfavorable to conservation and the depredations of war have been considered, while an agrarian economy which led to a tutorial system of education has often been cited. The latter is the most logical explanation, for the completion of such tasks was more likely to occur under the discipline of the classroom; and it was often the teacher who took responsibility of framing the student's needlework, which helped to assure its preservation. However, there is ample evidence that finishing schools and boarding schools which stressed the ornamental needle arts were available to the daughters of affluent Southern planters just as they were for the children of wealthy New England merchants.[61] It does, in fact, seem logical that the agrarian life would have fostered the patronage of boarding schools more than the convenient conditions of city dwelling.[62]

One point must not be overlooked: that decorative embroideries were created by children of the upper classes, and if Southern girls devoted less attention to embroidery than their New England cousins, it was possibly because a variety of other pleasing diversions were open to them — diversions forbidden under the Puritan aegis.[63] The consequences of sinful idleness did not hover over them and the enforced industry of Puritan New England was foreign to their world.

It cannot be denied that the climate of the South was more conducive to outdoor pursuits, for there was not the

forced confinement of Northern winters. Then too, the climatic effects upon industriousness have often been remarked upon, and references to Northern energy and Southern indolence abound. They are usually more legendary than factual; yet they tempt one to consider the opinion of the dashing Colonel Dandridge of Virginia. After viewing the sampler of Philadelphia's Sally Wister in 1778, he bewailed the lack of such "needle wisdom" among the young Virginians with the unflattering comment that they were the "laziest girls in the world."[64]

In any case, it may be logically assumed that Elizabeth Gardner Armston conducted a school in Norfolk from 1766 through the year 1772 and possibly until 1775.[65] Since Elizabeth Boush worked a signed and dated Biblical embroidery while in attendance there, it is practically certain that her classmates created similar examples. Surely they, too, were English in character, and if they are unsigned, it will now be difficult or impossible to determine their origin with certainty. However, the emergence of Elizabeth Boush's needlework picture reminds us, that even at this late date, a group of Southern schoolgirl embroideries *could* yet appear.

Mrs. Ring collects early American Schoolgirl embroideries and is particularly interested in research pertaining to their regional characteristics. She is a docent at the Bayou Bend Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas.

NOTES

1. Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States,* 2 vols. (New York: Reprint by Octagon Books, 1974), 1:284-285.
2. Collection of the Concord Antiquarian Society, Concord, Mass.
3. Lydia Hoopes of Goshen Township, Pa. embroidered a band sampler in 1765 which names Mrs. Hollis's School (Margaret B. Schiffer, *Historical Needlework of Pennsylvania,* Charles Scribner's Sons, New York 1968, p. 24).
   Hannah Foster of Evesham, N. J. signed a genealogical sampler in 1743 and stated "Elizabeth Sullivan taught me." This could have been a governess or a schoolmistress. A reference to a "Union Academy" in Salem, Mass. on the 1748 sampler of Mary Crowinshield is questionable. (Ethel Stanwood Bolton and Eva Johnston Coe, *American Samplers.* The Massachusetts Society of the Colonial Dames in America, Thomas Todd Co., Boston 1921) pp. 40, 45.

4. The earliest surviving colonial needlework may be Loara Standish's sampler. The daughter of Miles Standish, she was born in Plymouth in 1623. (Bolton & Coe, Frontispiece and p. 4). A canvas-work embroidery of the Southworth arms recorded in the 1657 inventory of William Bradford may have been worked earlier in Plymouth by Alice Carpenter Southworth Bradford. (*The Magazine Antiques,* Nov. 1941, p. 280).
   The daughters of Gov. John Leverett of Massachusetts, born in Boston in 1651 and 1655, made an embroidered casket, probably about 1670. (Gertrude Townsend, "Notes on New England Needlework before 1800," *The Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club,* 1944; Frontispiece and p. 7).
5. Woody, 1: pp. 150-151, 219, 282-283.
6. John L. Nevinson, *Victoria and Albert Museum Catalogue of English Domestic Embroidery* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1950) p. 38.
7. Several exceptional groups of 18th century American embroideries are identifiable by style and technique. Among these are the following: an enormous group of canvas-work "Fishing Lady" pictures of the Boston area; Boston's Adam and Eve samplers of the 1740s; crinkly silk, long-stitched embroideries of Salem, Massachusetts, c. 1750-1790; Rhode Island samplers, c. 1760-1799; the band-type samplers and Dresden-work embroideries of Philadelphia.
8. Beginning in the Middle Ages, English embroidery became renowned for its perfection. In accord with these traditions, the English schoolgirl was forced to correct mistakes until her sampler or picture displayed flawless execution. Evidently, greater permissiveness quickly developed in the colonies, and the resulting child-like qualities and naive imperfections found in American work are appealing to 20th century collectors.
9. Averil Colby, *Samplers* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1964) pp. 118-124. Samplers were the first embroideries to mention a teacher and some, like the following, (Colby, p. 119) were worked in rhyme:

   Mary Wright is M(y)
   NAME AND WITH my NE
   DL I wrought the sa
   me and Gooddy Readd wa
   s my dame 1669.

10. Nevinson, p. 38.
11. Nancy Graves Cabot, "Pattern Sources of Scriptural Subjects in Tudor and Stuart Embroideries" *Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club,* Vol. XXX, New York 1946, p. 4.
12. Homer Eaton Keyes, "The Editor's Attic" *The Magazine Antiques,* August 1929, pp. 101-102.
13. *The Virginia Gazette or the American Advertiser,* Richmond, Va. 4 Sept. 1784, 1, col. 3.

14. Pattern drawers for embroidery advertised in the Boston Gazette in 1737 and 1758. (Hope Hanley, *Needlepoint in America,* Charles Scribner's Sons, New York 1969, pp. 54-55).
15. Mary Newton Stanard, *Colonial Virginia Its People and Customs,* (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1917) p. 317.
16. Thomas Thorne, "Eighteenth Century Painting in the South" *The Magazine Antiques,* March 1951, p. 205.
17. Annie Lash Jester, *Adventurers of Purse and Person, Virginia 1607-1625,* (Sponsored by the Order of the First Families of Virginia, 1607-1624, second edition, 1964) pp. 241-242.
18. Charles F. McIntosh, *Abstracts of Norfolk County Wills,* 2 vols. (Richmond: The Colonial Dames of America in the State of Virginia, 1914-1922) 2: p. 139.
19. *Ibid.*
20. "1769 Aged 16" was written on the back of the portrait and copied when it was relined in recent years. See Carolyn J. Weekley, "Artists Working in the South" *The Magazine Antiques,* Vol. CX, No. 5, November 1976, pp. 1046-1047.
21. The lace on Elizabeth's dress is typical of costly 18th century European lace. The light and open effect at the neckline suggests a bobbin lace. The artist must have taken some liberties, making it impossible to identify the type of lace with certainty; also, that on the sleeves appears to be a different type from the lace at the neckline, but this would not be especially unusual. I am grateful to lace authority, Virginia Churchill Bath, for this opinion.
22. "Norfolk County Marriage Bonds" *William and Mary Quarterly,* Vol. 8 (2nd Series) Jan.-Oct. 1928; (Williamsburg, Va.: Institute of Early American History and Culture) p. 108.
23. *The Virginia Gazette,* (Purdie & Dixon) Williamsburg, 3 Dec. 1772, p. 2, col. 2.
24. *William and Mary Quarterly,* Vol. 18, No. 2, Oct. 1909, p. 143.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Norfolk County Will Book No. 2,* Will of Samuel Boush III, p. 232; (Court House, Chesapeake, Va.) In 1779 Samuel Boush was living in Brunswick County where he had evidently moved after the destruction of Norfolk in 1776. In 1779 he owned at least six plantations and much town property in Norfolk.
27. Henry Read McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the Council of the State of Virginia,* 3 vols. (Richmond: The Virginia State Library, 1931) 1: pp. 77-78.
28. *The Virginia Gazette,* (Purdie) Williamsburg, 17 Nov. 1775, 2, col. 1.
29. In May of 1793, no white person resided on the Travis plantation at Jamestown Island except the overseer, Joel Gathright, who was murdered by two Negro women named Daphney and Nell. (*Virginia Calendar of State Papers,* 11 vols., Wm. P. Palmer, ed., Virginia State Library, Kraus Reprint Corp., New York 1968) 6: pp. 521, 532, 543.

30. Research Department Files of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Va.
31. *DAR Patriot Index,* (Washington: National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1966) p. 686.
32. Charles B. Cross, Jr., ed., *Memoirs of Helen Calvert Maxwell Read,* (Norfolk County Historical Society of Chesapeake, Va., 1970) pp. 39, 41.
33. William Buchan taught in the public school of Norfolk Borough from 1761 until 1762. (Henry S. Rorer, *History of Norfolk Public Schools, 1681-1968,* typescript, 1968; Virginia State Library) pp. 4-5. If this was the same Buchan, it must have been following his year with the public school that he opened a "select school" attended by Helen Maxwell. It is not recorded elsewhere.
34. *The Virginia Gazette,* (Purdie) 21 Mar. 1766, 3, col. 3.
35. Woody, 1: p. 30.
36. G. E. and K. K. Fussell, *The English Countrywoman A. D. 1500-1900,* (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1971) pp. 106-107.
37. *Ibid.,* p. 107.
38. Woody, 1: p. 303.
39. Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New England and New York,* 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), 1: p. 372.
40. Edward Boykin, *To the Girls and Boys,* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1964) p. 28.
41. Woody, 1: p. 271.
42. Isaac Samuel Harrell, *Loyalism in Virginia,* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1926) p. 33.
43. *South Carolina Gazette,* 15 Feb. 1734/5, p. 3, col. 2.
44. *The Virginia Gazette,* Williamsburg, (Hunter) 17 Nov. 1752, p. 2, col. 2.
45. All the skills E. Gardner Armston proposed to teach were mentioned in advertisements of earlier colonial newspapers excepting "wan work" which appeared in her advertisement of 21 Mar. 1766. This term seems to be unknown and it was probably an error in printing "wax work."
46. Norfolk County Court Order Book No. 1, p. 219 (21 Mar. 1769).
47. "Abstracts from Norfolk County Marriage Bonds," *Lower Norfolk County Antiquary,* Vol. 4, Pt. 2, 1902, p. 61.
48. Freer Armston was baptized 25 July 1738; Bishop's Transcripts for Blaby (1 D41/3) Leicestershire Record Office, Leicester, England.
49. British Public Record Office Reference A.O. 13/27; Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.
50. *The Virginia Gazette,* (Purdie & Dixon) 11 July 1766, 2, col. 3.
51. *Ibid.* 27 April 1769, 4, col. 1.

52. *Norfolk County Tithables 1730-1785,* (Members of the Borough of Norfolk Chapters, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1954) p. 76. Armston advertised for the return of his "Irish Servant man who goes by the name of THOMAS FAY. He is about eighteen years of Age, wears his own Hair tied behind, walks bad," etc. (*The Virginia Gazette,* Purdie & Dixon, 11 July 1771, 3, col. 3.)
53. *The Virginia Gazette,* (Purdie & Dixon) 31 Mar. 1774, 3, col. 1.
54. Harrell, p. 33.
55. British Public Record Office; Virginia Survey Report No. 2391; Claim dated 30 Aug. 1777, (24 pages).
56. William S. Forrest, *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Norfolk and Vicinity,* (Lindsay and Blakiston, Philadelphia 1853) p. 80.
57. British Public Record Office; Virginia Survey Report No. 2391.
58. Leicester Probate Court; Will of William Armston, dated 1 Nov. 1776; PR/T/1777/8. Leicestershire Record Service.
59. British Public Record Office; Virginia Survey Report No. 3243, 13 Feb. 1786, pp. 405-409.
60. See Note No. 7.
61. Woody, 1: pp. 282-285.
62. "Tutors frequently advertised for positions, but a majority of advertisements were inserted by families desiring teachers." (Woody, 1: p. 279).
63. Woody, 1: p. 251.
64. Albert Cook Myers, ed., *Sally Wister's Journal, A True Narrative,* Philadelphia 1902, p. 159.
65. Perhaps Elizabeth Gardner Armston had closed her school or had a rival when the following advertisement appeared in *The Virginia Gazette or Norfolk Intelligencer* of 4 August 1774.

A Boarding School

Mrs. Campbell begs leave to inform the Ladies, that she has taken a House near the Church, and intends opening a Boarding and Day School for Young Ladies, on Monday the 18th of July, where those who will please to favor her with the care of their Children, may depend on the strictest attention from their

humble servant

Susanna Campbell

Norfolk, July 13

Textile analysis courtesy of Mr. J. Frank King,
Hanes Research and Development Laboratories.

A Study of Baroque- and Gothic-Style Gravestones in Davidson County, North Carolina

Bradford L. Rauschenberg

Next to architecture, one of the most permanent forms of decorative art is the gravestone. These sedentary art forms, at times clustering, thus prominent within a graveyard, are occasionally so different in appearance that one takes a second look. So is the case under study within the county of Davidson, south and adjacent to Winston-Salem, North Carolina (Fig. 1). Of the people settling the Piedmont in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Germans and Swiss proportionately produced the most visually recognizable decorative art. Some is termed folk art. Such is the material culture of this study, in which gravestone carving is analyzed for its spatial and

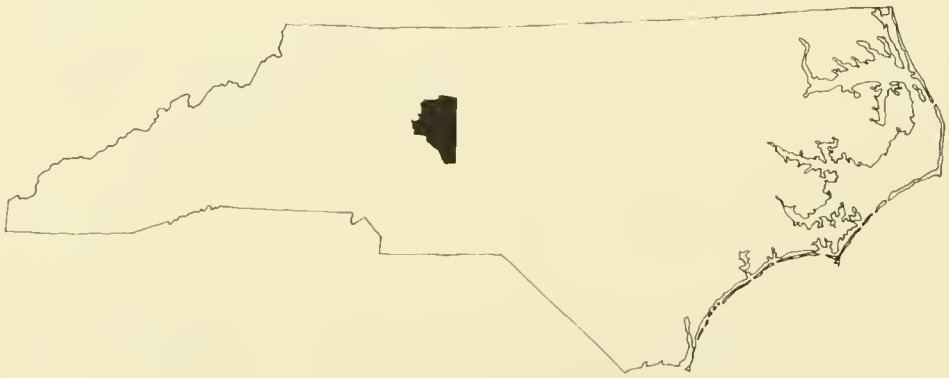


Figure 1. Location of Davidson County, North Carolina.

temporal placement within its own self-imposed boundaries of Davidson county.[1]

In recording these gravestones, two distinct styles of carving appeared: Baroque and Gothic;[2] both are retarditaire. This retention of style is what one should expect in most of the arts of the early Piedmont. These two styles were being produced in the first four decades of the nineteenth century. The purpose of this study was to photograph and record the 305 gravestones which exhibit characteristics of the Baroque and Gothic styles, all within ten cemeteries in Davidson County, carved between 1803 and 1843. Many other graveyards in Davidson and neighboring counties were investigated, and there was always the desire that some forgotten family plot would yield other examples. Further search was unrewarding.

The availability of stone determined to what extent the design element could be executed. In this case steatite (soapstone), which occurs locally, was used exclusively.[3] Geologically, soapstone is rich in talc, one of the softest minerals (hardness 1-1.5), thus carving could be effected with ease. Carved edges, undoubtedly sharp at the time of execution, have worn with weather, Lichen also has its effect on gravestones. Vandalism and the careless use of lawnmowers are constantly taking their toll.

The availability of an ideal medium set the stage for the development of the Baroque and Gothic styles as dictated by the traditions of the German and Swiss settlers. Welsh, English and Scotch-Irish also settled the area but, with the exception of names, no immediate decorative art influence can be observed in these gravestones.

The transmission of concepts and traits is largely oral, as would be the case for travellers to the New World. However, in family Bibles and fraktur work, especially *taufscheine* (birth and baptismal certificates), were safely kept in Bibles and chests.[4] If these hand-decorated documents are studied, it is apparent that symbolism was highly developed and based both on religion and social custom. Proverbs, folk tales, folk songs, and superstitions also provide an excellent oral transmitter for symbolism. In expressing their culture through the decorative arts such as fraktur, ceramics, metalwork, furniture, and stonework, these people began an immediately recognizable art style which today many call folk art. To some extent this may be true, but for the most part their art is as constant as the

Figure 2a. Baroque Style Development (see text for explanation). Unnamed, dated 1799 (backdated?), Bethany Church. Front view.

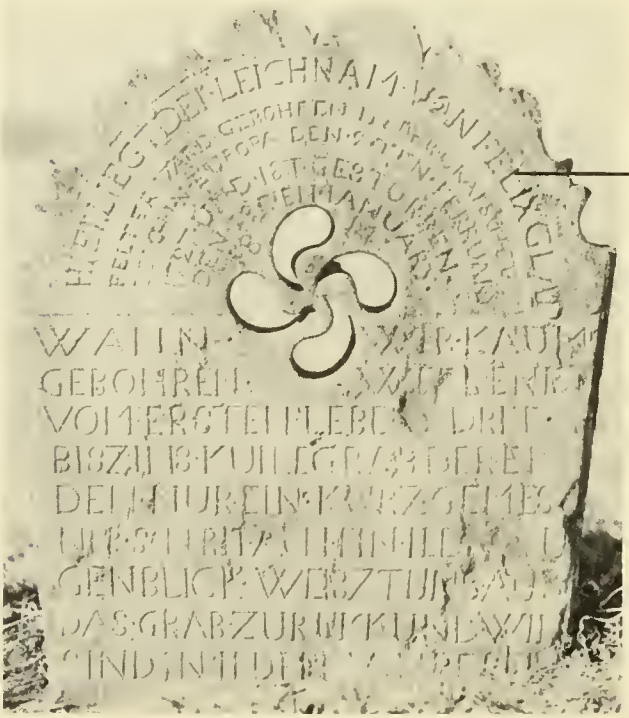


Figure 2b. Baroque Style Development (see text for explanation). Felix Gladfelter, 18 January 1814, Bethany Church. Front view. HOA 18½, WOA 16¾, DOA 2 inches.

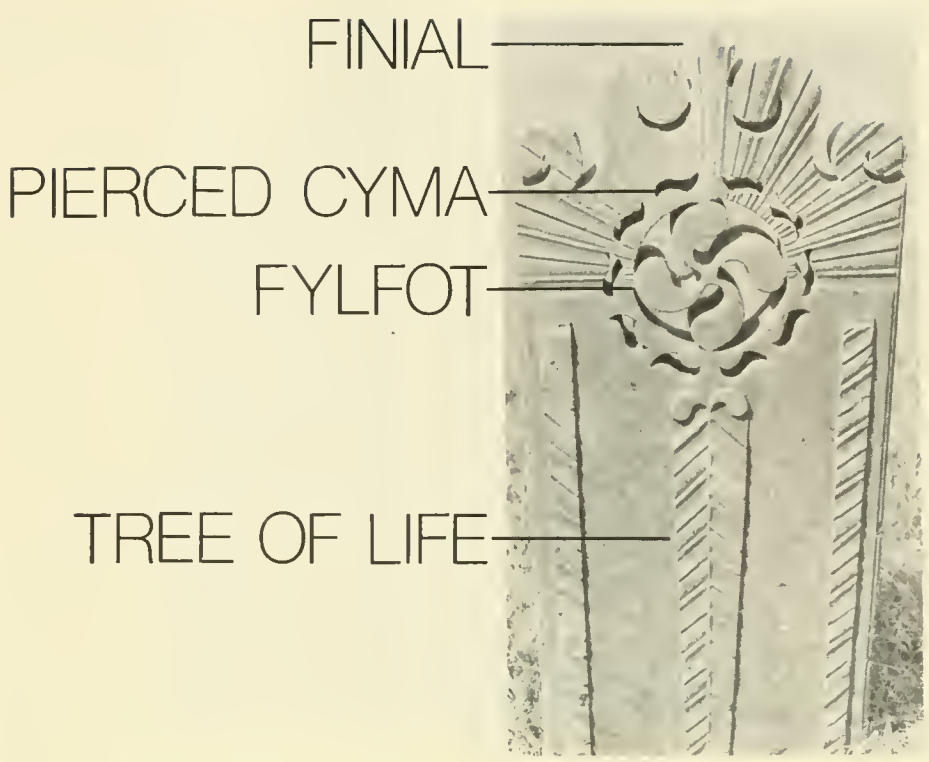


Figure 2c. Baroque Style Development (see text for explanation). Kezia Jones, 11 December, 1828, Abbotts Creek Church. Rear view. HOA 28, WOA 14½, DOA 2½ inches.

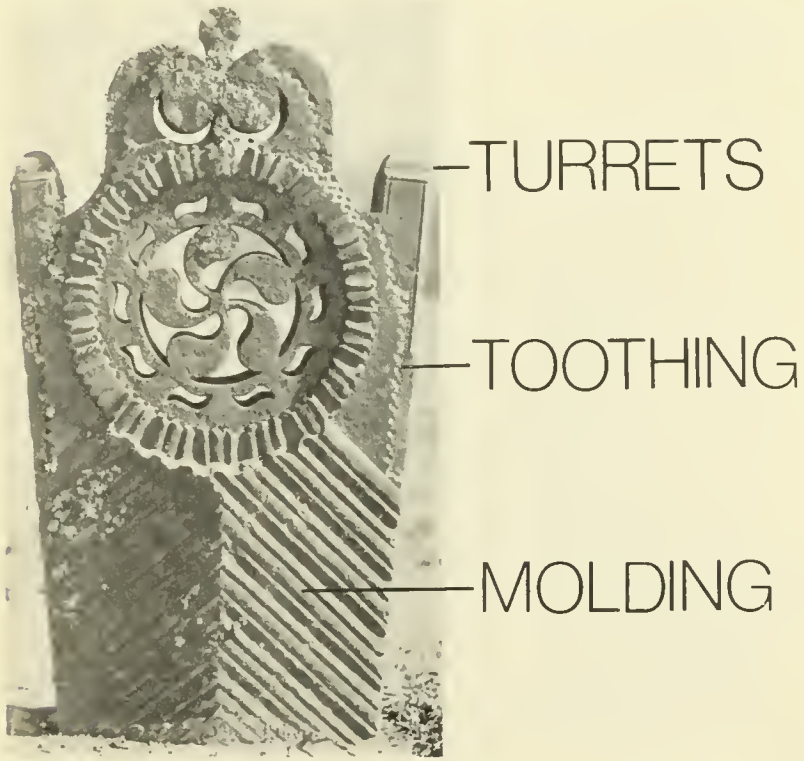


Figure 2d. Baroque Style Development (see text for explanation). Daniel Wagoner, 12 October, 1827, Bethany Church. Rear view. HOA 26½, WOA 15¼, DOA 2¼ inches.

Figure 2e. Baroque Style Development (see text for explanation). Elizabeth Idol, 10 June, 1843, Abbotts Creek Church. Front view.

Figure 2f. Baroque Style Development (see text for explanation). Lucy DeLap, 12 May, 1834, Bethany Church. Front view.

"factory" products of urban centers along the eastern seaboard. Thus, this combination of material and oral culture produces recurrent symbols in all of the Germanic decorative arts.[5]

One of the most prominent symbols is the swastika or fylfot, which is in actuality a cross and can also be interpreted as a sun. Another symbol is the tree of life, which is constantly being combined with the heart, the tulip, and the *Ur-bogen* or the concept of rebirth so often found at the base of many designs, often as a rising or setting sun. These are but a few of the major symbols, while the moon, *putti,* animals, vases, and endless compass-executed geometrical designs fill in spaces.

One of the major transmitters of design is the aforementioned *taufschein.* Numerous examples exist in Pennsylvania, Virginia and, to a lesser extent, in North Carolina. A major "school" of fraktur work in Piedmont North Carolina has been researched and may well center on an area quite near the center of the Baroque-style gravestones of this study.[6] It is natural, as in birth, that gravestones should reflect the use of these same symbols. In Pennsylvania, the Valley of Virginia, and North Carolina this is true in decreasing order of intensity. The Baroque- and Gothic-style gravestones of Davidson County are an exception. Here the design elements are prominent. Abbots Creek Baptist and Pilgrim Lutheran and German Reformed graveyards represent the major centers for the two styles.

The Baroque style offers itself best at Abbotts Creek graveyard. Surviving examples from 1803 to 1843 chronologically illustrate total development within a style, which also, like the Gothic, follows a three-part evolution: a definite beginning, peak development, and a decline as stronger styles are introduced by new carvers. The first phase of the Baroque is the solid gravestone with the simple ogee scalloped top, relying on the one line arched lettering for surface decoration (Fig. 2a). In the second phase arched lettering expands to several lines and fills the top half as does the history of the deceased the bottom half. The important element of piercing is added in this phase as a negative fylfot (Fig. 2b). This phase is twofold. A transition of carvers occurs and pedimentlike tops appear, complete with piercing, complex moldings, surface carving, and a no-two-alike enthusiasm to create showpieces unrivaled elsewhere (Figs. 2c, d). Phase three illustrates the decline of the Baroque style and the introduction of the Gothic style from Pilgrim Church (Figs. 2e, f).

The Gothic style at Pilgrim graveyard evidences itself from 1810 to 1843. The phases of its evolution, while not as apparent as those of the Baroque, are perhaps reflective of the more orthodox Lutheran religion. Here also are three phases. The first, reflecting Gothic architecture[7] with its variety of arch forms, yet simple and restrained, emerges (Figs. 3a, b). Phase two illustrates a further development of the Gothic style with its foils at the shoulders, reflective of church architecture and its tracery components (Figs. 3c, d). Also in this phase is seen the arched lettering (Figs. 3, c, d) as at Abbotts Creek. The third phase illustrates the decline of the Gothic style and the influence of the Baroque style from Abbotts Creek (Figs. 3e, f).

The diffusion of the Baroque (Fig. 4a) and Gothic (Fig. 4b) styles throughout Davidson County is recognized in diminishing influence the further one travels from those two centers. The frequency of use of symbols or features and

Figure 3a. Gothic Style Development (see text for explanation). Caderina Sauer, 12 December, 1816, Pilgrim Church. Front view. HOA 23¼, WOA 11½, DOA 1½ inches.

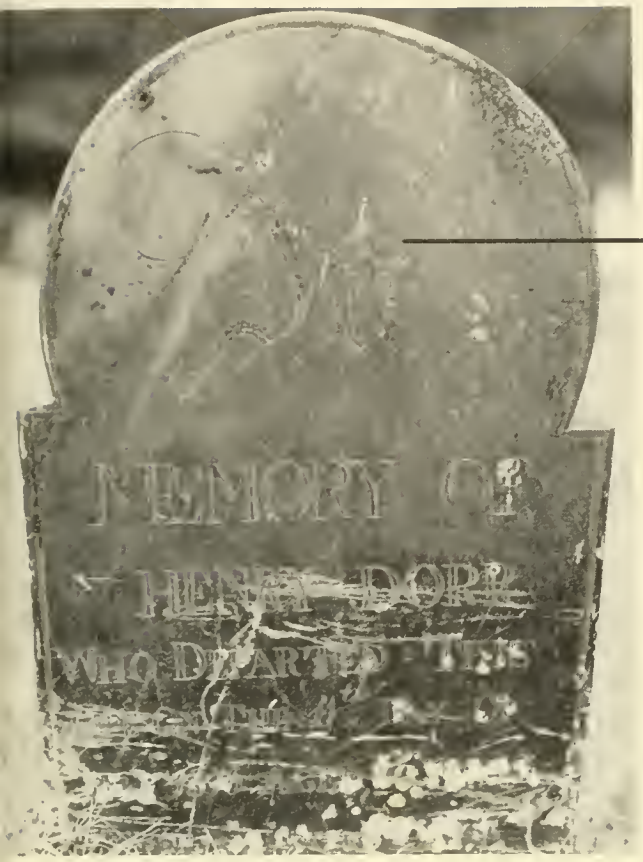


Figure 3b. Gothic Style Development (see text for explanation). Henry Dorr, 11 May, 1816, Pilgrim Church. Front view.

the volume of gravestones is shown in the graphs (Figs. 5a, b, c). Only three graveyards are shown because of space limitations, as were only the gravestones with the most pure and prominent features plotted. Of the 305 gravestones recorded 173 were selected for this article. The remaining gravestones exhibit influences from other minor unidentified style centers and retain only minor Baroque- and Gothic-style features. Bethany Lutheran and German Reformed Church graveyard is included because of its volume of stones and geographical location between Abbotts Creek and Pilgrim (Figs. 4a, b). It is not considered a style center, however, as its designs are sporadic and diffused because of various subinfluences, evidencing minor carvers. The influence of other carvers and styles is recognized in increasing amounts as one travels further from Abbotts and Pilgrim churches. The ten graveyards and the

Figure 5
See fold-out page opposite . . .

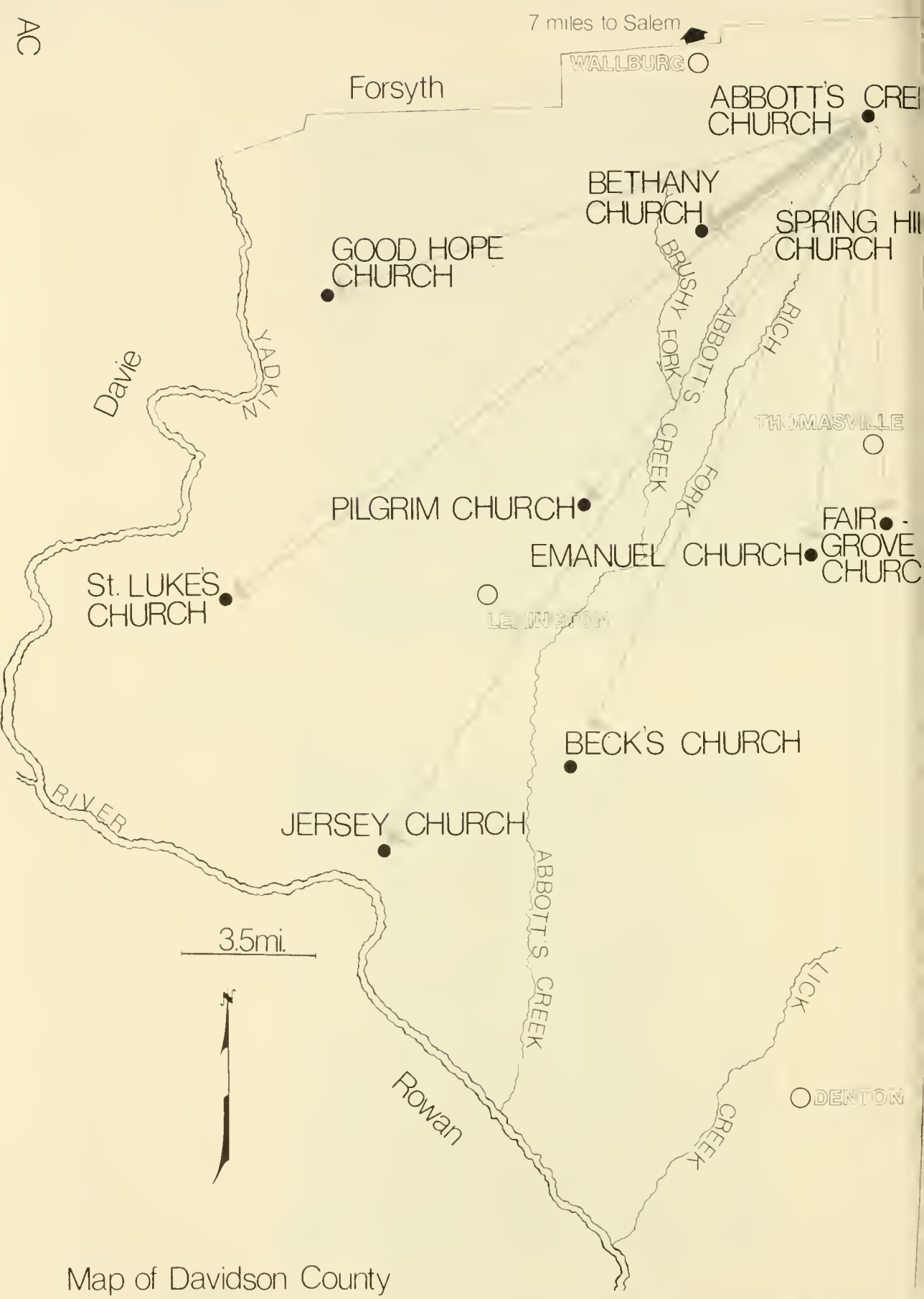
Figure 5. Graphs of feature frequency. Width of line indicates volume. Dotted line indicates feature continues with no examples. A. Abbotts Creek, B. Bethany, C. Pilgrim.

Figure 3c. Gothic Style Development (see text for explanation). George Spricker, 11 August, 1818, Pilgrim Church. Front view. HOA 25¼, WOA 14, DOA 2 inches.

Figure 3d. Gothic Style Development (see text for explanation). Adam Hetrich, 16 December 1815, Pilgrim Church. Front view. HOA 20, WOA 13¾, DOA 2¼ inches.

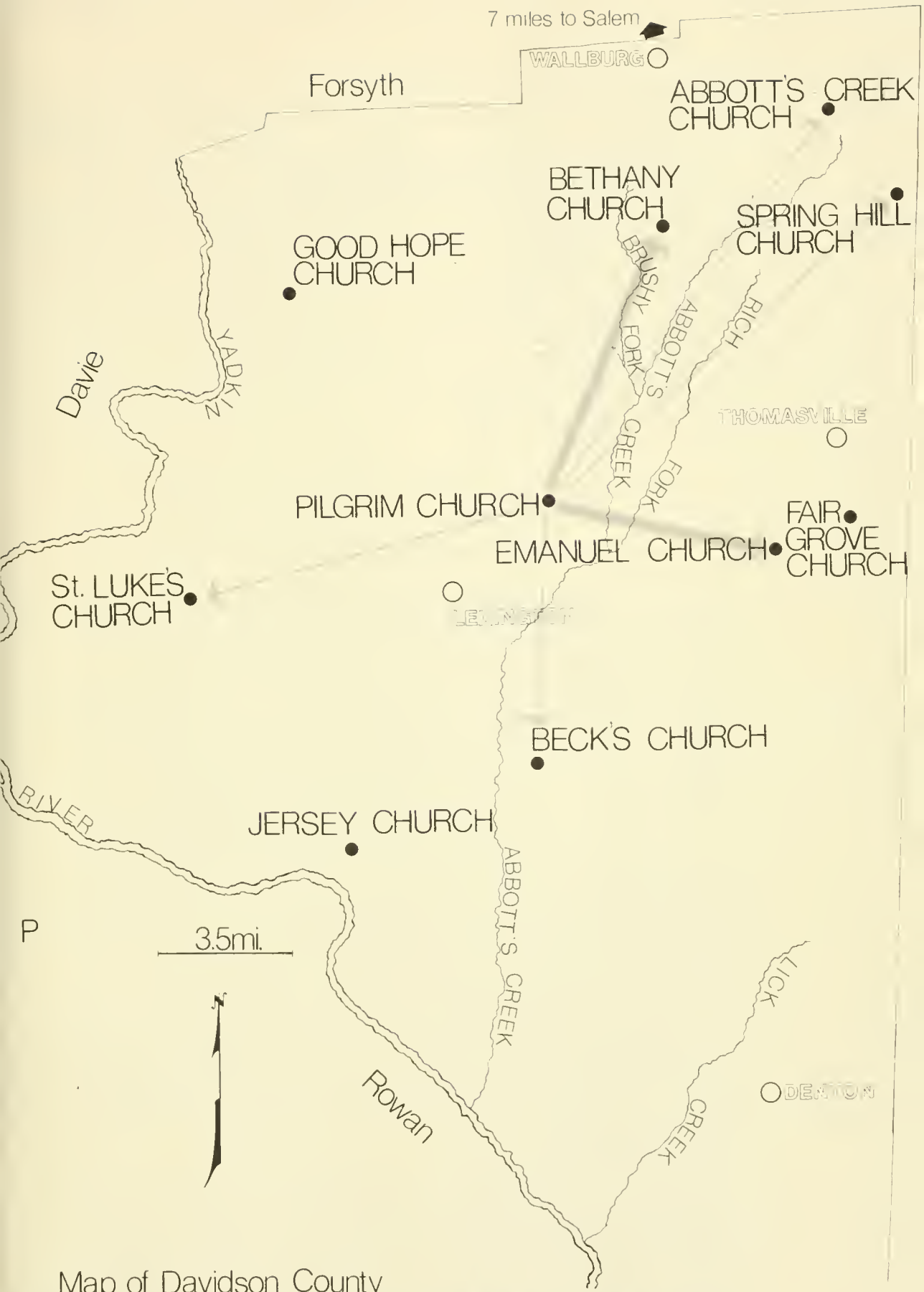
Figure 3e. Gothic Style Development (see text for explanation). Peter Lapp, 1827, Pilgrim Church, Front view. HOA 31, WOA 16, DOA 2 inches.

Figure 3f. Gothic Style Development (see text for explanation). Sarah Zink, 22 October 1843, Pilgrim Church. Front view.



Map of Davidson County

Figure 4a. Map of Davidson County. Diffusion of Baroque Style to other graveyards from Abbotts Creek Church. Width of line indicates amount of influence.



Map of Davidson County

Figure 4b. Map of Davidson County. Diffusion of Gothic style to other graveyards from Pilgrim Church. Width of line indicates amount of influence.

volume of Baroque- and Gothic-style examples are:

	Baroque	Gothic
Lutheran and German Reformed:		
Becks	4	1
Bethany	31	20
Emanuel	5	11
Pilgrim	7	32
St. Lukes	1	1
Methodist:		
Fair Grove	3	—
Good Hope	1	—
Spring Hill	1	2
Baptist		
Abbotts Creek	49	3
Jersey	1	—

A single example of symbol debasement based on distance from the original source, time lapse, and the carver's ability and background is in order. The two gravestones (Figs. 6a, b) are but one example of this process common to all motif or symbol diffusion studies. Jersey Church, located twenty-six miles from Abbotts Creek Church, has a gravestone dated 1843 (Fig. 6b). When compared with the 1822 gravestone of Abbotts Creek (Fig. 6a), it immediately becomes apparent that the tree-of-life symbol has been drastically diluted and the complex molding so reduced that both elements are vestigial.

A comparison of the graphs (Figs. 5a, b, c) will illustrate the chronological decline of design elements. If the graphs of the other graveyards were illustrated, it would be seen that many examples exhibit this symbol debasement.

Aside from the prominent pedimentlike top of the Baroque-style gravestones, the fylfot is the most recognizable symbol, and its use has an interesting effect on a Baroque stone (Fig. 2d). This piercing produces a tracerylike effect which is of Gothic concept.

When the fylfots are compared in all of the graveyards, the variations are reflective of the carver's ingenuity (Fig. 7). It will be noticed that the variation is in a positive (Figs. 7c, d, e, f) and negative (Figs. 7a, b) attitude. Also there is a right or left direction of the fylfot and the number of arms varies. The method of centering the fylfot with either a shaft (Fig. 7c) or with lobes (Figs. 7a, b), in combination with the other

variations, produces a most pleasing interpretation of the basic fylfot.

The epitaphs on the gravestones in this study can be summarized in one graveyard — Abbotts Creek (Figs. 7a, c). This was the only graveyard which exhibited verse epitaphs. All the others contain only the briefest information (Fig. 7b), with an occasional place of birth (Fig. 2b, Zurrick). That Abbotts Creek Baptist Church is essentially Calvinist is interesting, as today in Switzerland there are no Lutherans, only Calvinists and Zwinglians.[8] The epitaphs bear a strong resemblance to New England gravestones and Protestantism.

Most of the verses are in couplet form:

Loving husband and children dear
It was in my prime I left you here
On earth our time was spent in love
In hopes again to meet above
I am gone into that happy place
Where I shall see you face to face.[9]

The gravestone of the child Joseph S. Williams (Fig. 7c) is an exception to the couplet verse. It is a quatrain:

Farewell my parents here below
Though much you do me love
My Jesus calls and I must go
To reign with him above.

Comparison of epitaphs found on published New England gravestones cannot be made here, but it appears that the North Carolina carver had a source-book[10] for verses, the family of the deceased gave the carver the verse or we have found a Piedmont poet.

While discussing epitaphs it should be noted that Abbotts Creek did not contain gravestones with German wording. The carvers utilized Roman letters on most gravestones. One of the exceptions is Peter Lapp's 1827 Gothic gravestone at Pilgrim Church (Fig. 3e) which exhibits lettering of the Schwabach type[11] so often seen on fraktur work. This is a good example of Gothic style lettering on a transitional Gothic style gravestone.

It is a problem to analyze the many hands which carved epitaphs. Time lapse between the carving of the stone design and the lettering is difficult to determine. Also is the question of when the gravestone was placed after interment. On some

finely carved gravestones it is apparent that an amateur added the words. In a few instances it was noted that a Baroque style gravestone of the 1830 phase was backdated for a grave of a much earlier death. Also noted were stones obviously made by late nineteenth century stonecutters to match 1830 Baroque styles, perhaps to complement other family stones.

As to the carvers of gravestones, it should be recognized that, in the case of Davidson County stones, 1803 to 1843, we are dealing with a rural setting as compared with an urban coastal city such as Newport, Rhode Island or Charleston, South Carolina,[12] with a high population and an inconsistent death rate.[13] In the urban centers gravestone carvers were also involved in making architectural parts for the building trades. The rural gravestone carver worked that trade only parttime, and he usually had a more stable economic base.

Figure 6a. Tree of Life debasement. Sarah Davis, 20 January, 1822, Abbotts Creek Church. Rear view. HOA 24½, WOA 14½, DOA 2½ inches.

Figure 6b. Tree of Life debasement. Jane Park, 7 November, 1843, Jersey Church. Rear view.

In Salem, North Carolina, for example, Traugott Leinbach, silversmith and clockmaker, was advised by the Elders of the Moravian Church in 1831 "not to bring the large gravestone on which he has been working for the grave of a gentleman from South Carolina, who died here [Salem], on the graveyard."[14] It had previously been emphasized to Leinbach that "It would be a pity if the simplicity and equality which has hitherto characterized our stones in the graveyard were to be marred by the contemplated setting of a [large] stone."[15] The early Salem Moravians maintained a controlled society which today is still recognized in the graveyards throughout Moravian communities.[16] Because of the simplicity of the gravestones several craftsmen could engage in this side occupation with uniform results.

In another Piedmont town, Salisbury, North Carolina, a turner was also involved with gravemarkers. William R. Hughes advertised in 1833 "that he still carried on the Chair & Bedstead Making Business . . . and will make head and foot boards for Graves complete; lettered or plain."[17] Occasionally

Figure 7. Variations in fylfot designs.

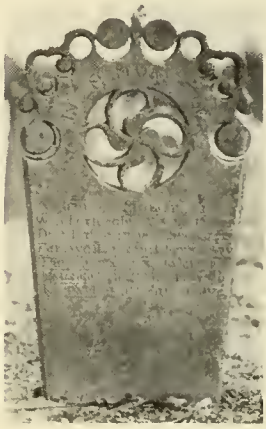


Figure 7a.

Figure 7b.

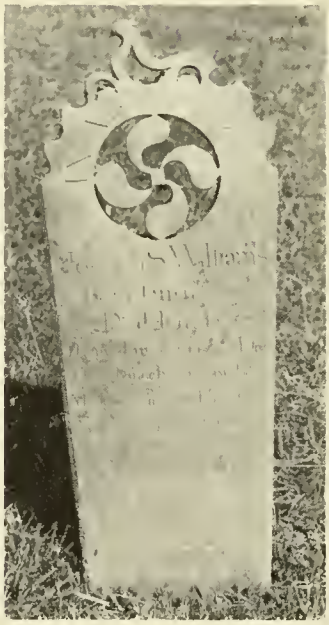


Figure 7c.

Figure 7d.

Figure 7e.

Figure 7f.

wooden markers are found in graveyards, long illegible. There is evidence of European graves being marked with wood and iron[18] markers, and it was probably also done in back-country Pennsylvania and Virginia.

It is of particular interest to relate the finding of a white paint laid over a yellow paint layer on the base of the Baroque-style gravestone of Deliah Roberts at Abbotts Creek, dated 1836. After extensive examination of most all the gravestones of this study no other evidence of paint was found. In Salem, however, the Elders in 1803 recorded that "In regard to the gravestones, we think that the Brethren and Sisters may choose the type of lettering they prefer, and the color of the paint."[19] The author has been unable to locate further evidence of painted gravestones in America.

It must have been a visually exciting view to see a graveyard ablaze with color, especially with the Baroque style of the Davidson County gravestones. If the stones were in polychrome, it would bring the parallel even closer to that of the *taufschein* where life begins.

Though not painted, the Swisegood school of furniture made in Davidson County bears strong resemblance to the Baroque gravestones of that county. Like the gravestones, no two corner cupboards are identical, though more restrained in detail.

The Swisegood school of cabinetmakers began as early as 1809 with Mordica Collins (born March 22, 1783), who, in 1810, took John Swisegood as apprentice to the cabinetmaker and joiner trade. In 1816 or 1817 Collins moved to Indiana and Swisegood subsequently took Jesse Clodfelter and Jonathan Long as apprentices. Long continued the school for thirteen years after Swisegood moved to Illinois in 1845.[20] The exact location of Swisegood's shop has been impossible to spot. Land transactions point to the Reedy Branch, a prong of the Brushy Fork of Abbotts Creek (Fig. 4). This area is no more than twelve miles from Abbotts Creek graveyard. If this is not the site for the shop, it was probably closer, as we find that Swisegood ran a sawmill in sight of Abbotts Creek graveyard.

The furniture of the Swisegood school is best represented for our purpose by a corner cupboard attributed to Collins

Figure 8a. Corner cupboard attributed to Mordica Collins, ca. 1810. Walnut with yellow pine. HOA 94 inches. MESDA acquisition number 2439.

Figure 8b. Detail of pediment in 8a.

Figure 8c. Rear view of gravestone from Bethany Church showing similarity with door shape as in 8a.

Figure 8d. Front view of gravestone from Bethany showing pediment similarity with 8b.

Figure 9a. Molding comparison between side of gravestone (1) from Abbotts Creek Church and medial molding of Swisegood corner cupboard (2), MESDA Research Files S-553.

(Figs. 8a, b). Similar cupboards were also produced by Swisegood, but the details and moldings of this particular cupboard best compare with the Baroque-style gravestones (Figs. 8c, d, 9a, b).

The final comparison can be made with the time period of the Baroque style and the same time period for the Swisegood school (Figs. 5a, b, c). They are identical. Further, this is the only school of furniture known from Davidson County.

It is regrettable that research has not located a single stone that was signed, nor were any carvers' names found in estate settlement records.[21] All evidence points to the conclusion that the Swisegood school cabinetmakers either produced the Baroque style gravestones or were very influential in their design.

The Baroque- and Gothic-style gravestones from Davidson County, North Carolina, represent a unique development in the United States. They are the only examples of pierced work known to the author. It is hoped that this article will stimulate scholars to research and publish more on Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina gravestones, an often overlooked decorative art manifestation, very important to the interpretation of our past culture.

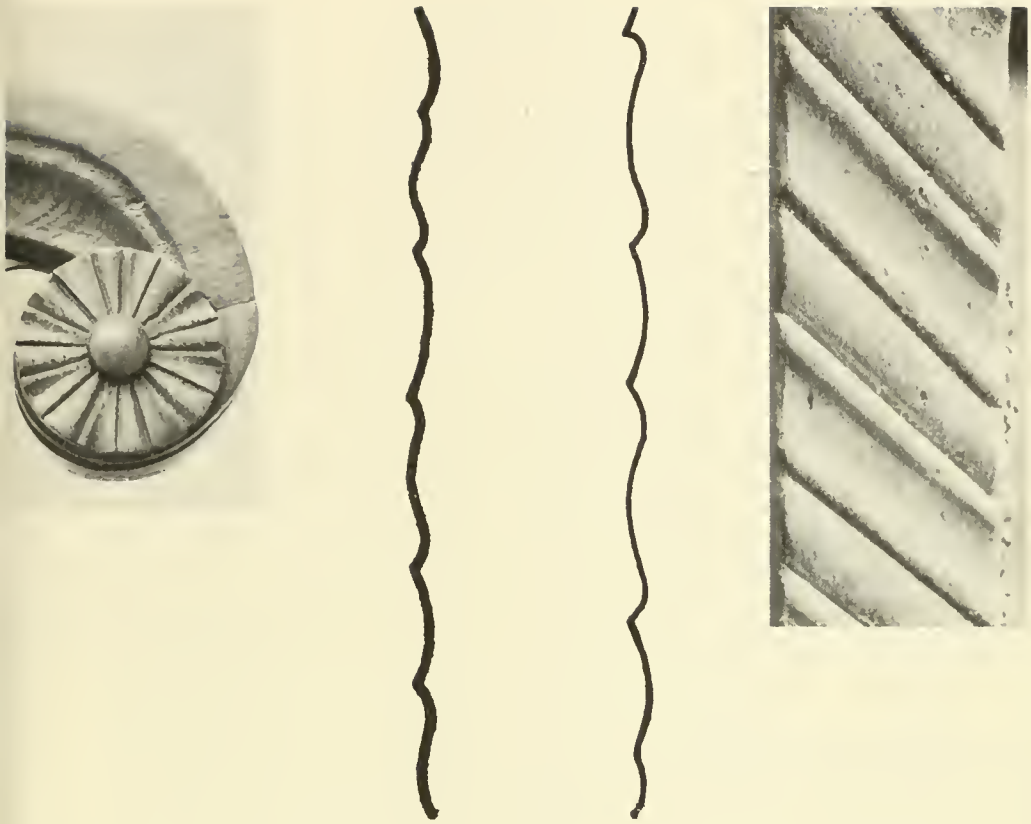


Figure 9b. Profile comparison between rosette of Collins corner cupboard (1, 2) and side of gravestone from Abbotts Creek Church (3, 4). Profile of gravestone (3).

Mr. Rauschenberg is Research Fellow at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts.

NOTES

1. Davidson County was formed from Rowan County on December 9, 1822, with Lexington as the county seat. See M. Jewell Sink and Mary Green Matthews, *Pathfinders Past and Present: A History of Davidson County North Carolina* (n.p., 1972), pp. 33-44.
2. These terms were decided upon because two distinct shapes were recognized and reflect patterns of the Baroque and Gothic European periods of material culture. In lieu of the term *provincial* before Baroque and Gothic, *style* will be used after each term as an understanding that we are dealing with a back-country interpretation of the two styles. For a discussion and interpretation of "provincial Baroque" as it relates to New England gravestones see Allan I. Ludwig, *Graven Images* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), pp. XXIX, 237. Also see John Bivins, Jr., "Baroque Elements in North Carolina Moravian Furniture," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts,* 1976 Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 38-63. See also Klaus Wust, *Folk Art in Stone* (Edinburg: Shenandoah History, 1970). This is an excellent short survey of gravestones and symbols of southwestern Virginia. For a short article which pictures ceramic gravemarkers see J. Roderick Moore, "Folk Crafts," *Arts in Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia Museum, 1971), Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 26, 27, Figs. 8, 9, p. 28, Fig. 10. Preston A. Barber, Pennsylvania German Tombstones (Allentown: The Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 1954), Vol. 18. For an archaeologist's viewpoint see Edwin Dethlefsen and James Deetz, "Death's Heads, Cherubs, and Willow Trees: Experimental Archaeology in Colonial Cemeteries," *American Antiquity* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Printing Service, 1966), Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 602-510.
3. Thomas L. Watson and Francis B. Laney, "The Building and Ornamental Stones of North Carolina," *North Carolina Geological Survey* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell, 1906), Bulletin No. 2, pp. 126-127.
4. Klaus Wust, *Virginia Fraktur: Penmanship as Folk Art* (Edinburg: Shenandoah History, 1972), p. 27, Figs. 41, 42.
5. John Joseph Stoudt, *Pennsylvania German Folk Art* (Allentown: The Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 1966), Vol. 28, pp. 99-126.
6. John Bivins, Jr., "Fraktur in the South: An Itinerant Artist," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts,* 1975, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 1-23.
7. See, for example, John Harris and Jill Lever, *Illustrated Glossary of Architecture 850-1830* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966), Figs. 44-67.
8. Letter, Robert Wildhaber, Basel, Switzerland, to author, 27 August, 1977.
9. Epitaph of Elisabeth Bodenhamer, born June 2, 1772, died August 12, 1803. This gravestone is at Abbotts Creek and is an example of backdating. For other examples see Ludwig, *op. cit.,* p. 409.

10. New England gravestone designs indicate that emblem books, woodcuts and engravings were source material for designs on decorated gravestones. See Ludwig, *op. cit.,* pp. 274-283.
11. Franz Sales Meyer, *Handbook of Ornament* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1957), pp. 534, 537.
12. Such a gravestone carving shop in the urban town of Newport has been discussed in Esther Fisher Benton, "The History of the John Stevens Shop," *Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society* (Newport: Wilkinson Press, Inc., 1963) No. 112, October pp. 3-33. In the *City Gazette of the Daily Advertiser,* Charleston, S. C., October 13, 1791, p. 4, Robert Given, stonecutter, advertises that "he has on hand a general assortment of Gravestones, of different sizes and qualities, some of them richly ornamented. . . ." This is a good example of pre-cut gravestones.
13. In Charleston the death rate varied abruptly because of the yellow fever. The *Raleigh* (N.C.) *Register,* September 12, 1817 reported, for example, that the "Mortality in Charleston — from the 24th to the 31st of last month, there were 62 deaths, 32 of which were of yellow fever." MESDA Research Index.
14. Minutes of the Elders Conference, Salem, November 30, 1831, Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, N. C.
15. Minutes of the Aufseher Collegium, November 28, 1831, Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, N. C.
16. The Moravian graveyards are laid off according to choir groups into squares for married women and widows, married men and widowers, single men and boys and single women and girls. All gravestones are the same: square in shape and flat lying, with little wording, a symbol of the equality in death.
17. James H. Craig, *The Arts and Crafts in North Carolina* (Lynchburg: J. P. Bell Co., Inc., 1966), as quoting the *Western Carolinian,* Salisbury, N. C., May 27, 1833.
18. Iona Plath, *The Decorative Arts of Sweden* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966), p. 86.
19. Elders Conference, March 16, 1806, Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, N. C. Here also might be mentioned evidence found at Abbotts Creek of letters being filled in with melted sulphur. Six were found, all of the 1840s and 1860s. None were of either the Baroque or Gothic style. This could well be the end evidence of filling in letters wtih putty such as the mention in the records of the Congregational Conference of Salem, N. C., January 16, 1783, that "We shall carefully maintain the harmony so far kept up with gravestones in our Salem Grave Yard. . . . We shall also try to find some putty to fill the letters with." This use of putty or sulfur in gravestones is also seen in the furniture of Pennsylvania, Virginia and occasionally North Carolina.
20. Frank L. Horton and Carolyn J. Weekley, *The Swisegood School of Cabinetmaking* (Winston-Salem, N. C., The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 1973).

21. This probably indicates that the gravestone was ordered, made and placed on the grave long after the estate was settled. Several entries were found in estate settlements for all the master cabinetmakers in the Swisegood school as being paid for a coffin, Swisegood himself being the most often mentioned.

Appreciation for assistance in the preparation of material associated with this survey and article is extended to Jean, my wife, for listening and riding long hours in search of gravestones; Miss Paula Welshimer also for many miles in the country: Miss Louise Stevenson for artistic work in preparing the maps and graphs: to Miss Betty Dahill for searching the estate records in Raleigh, North Carolina; and Frank Horton for his special insight.

Charles Peale Polk: Gold Profiles on Glass

WHALEY BATSON

From shadow tracing on cave walls to the invention of a profile drawing machine by Gilles-Louis Chretien of France in 1786, the profile drawing passed from amateur execution into the hands of the professional artist. The invention of the machine known as the physiognotrace, introduced a further refinement, making it possible to turn out likenesses quickly and inexpensively. Not all profiles were the familiar miniature black cutouts. Working in New York in the 1750s was an expatriate Frenchman, Charles Balazar Fevret de Saint-Memin. He developed his own physiognotrace[1] and travelled from New York to Charleston, South Carolina, and cities in between, making life-size portraits with his machine. Saint-Memin crayoned in the physical features of his sitters to produce a likeness closer to a portrait. Other artists working in pastels[2] and oil show a reliance on a profile machine. In 1806, Cephas Thompson patented what he called a "delineating machine,"[3] and he painted a number of full-sized portraits in oil on canvas at this period in Richmond which look as if they might be based on outlines drawn by his machine. Such a machine was also used in outlining on glass or on gold leaf on glass.

The Field Research Program of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts has in the last years photographed eight of these *verre eglomise* profiles. Three are signed "C. P. Polk Fecit" and the other five are stylistically attributed to Polk. Two other signed gold profiles by Polk are in the collection of the American Antiquarian Society of Worcester, Massachusetts. The profiles were done on gold leaf on glass.

The lines were engraved in reverse from the back. The gold leaf outside the profile outline was carefully scraped away and the details were shown by hatching and cross-hatched lines. The glass was then painted black to throw the engraving in relief. An article discussing this art form referred to the medium as "very rare indeed."[4] Although more such engravings are now documented, they are still relatively rare. The fragility of the medium probably accounts for this rarity, as glass breakage, except for clean break, destroys the image. Also the black paint used as a background for the gold relief deteriorates with age, humidity, and general lack of care.

The technique of *verre eglomise* was used in the decorative arts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as well as in portraiture. Rectangular looking glasses of the period were decorated in this fashion, often using color rather than black and gold. Baltimore cabinetmakers incorporated the black and gold glass panels in various furniture forms. Usually the figures were allegorical. (Fig. 1). Inasmuch as Polk started his career in Baltimore,[5] he was probably familiar with the technique employed there. His Baltimore advertisements from 1785 to 1798, however, deal with his solicitations for portrait commissions, his drawing school, his real estate, and his merchandising involvements. Competition in and around Baltimore was keen; and listed in the MESDA Research Index are the names of about thirty artists working in and around Baltimore at this period. Three of the most prominent were Charles Willson Peale and his sons Rembrandt and Raphaelle, uncle and cousins of Polk. As a result, Polk was obviously having his problems establishing himself. Between the years 1785 and 1806 he advertised in Alexandria and Richmond, Virginia, and Hagerstown and Baltimore, Maryland. However, until his Richmond advertisement of 1806,[6] there is no mention of his working in gold profiles on glass.

On June 10, 1803, John Wesley Jarvis and his partner, Joseph Wood, advertised in the New York *Herald* the use of a physiognotrace to "execute Likenesses . . . either on glass or on paper."[7] Later, in correspondence with William Dunlap, Jarvis wrote that he made profiles on gold leaf "shadowing a little by hatching."[8] Also, a Mr. Morden, a miniature painter in Savannah, Georgia, in 1804 advertised a machine for taking profiles "on glass, gold leaf."[9] Prices varied from five dollars charged in New York by Jarvis to the three dollar

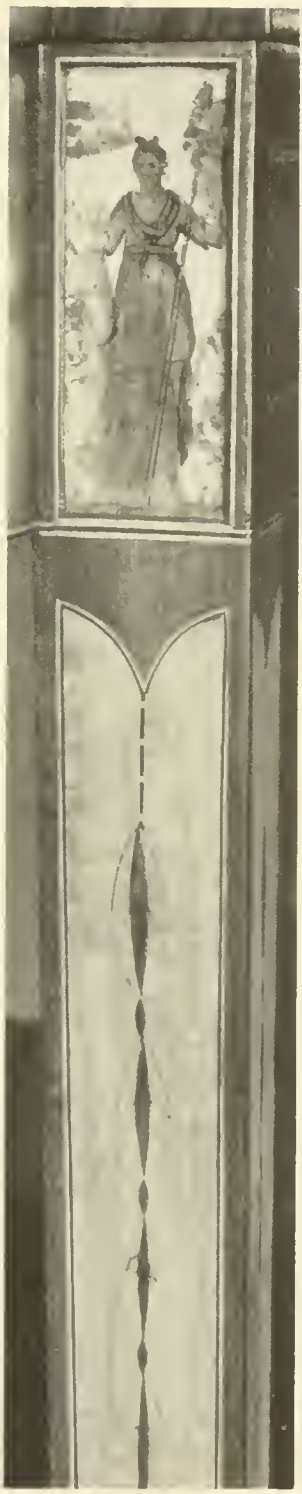


Figure 1. Baltimore table, mahogany and mahogany veneer, with poplar and ebony inlay and painted glass panels. The panels are signed "Mitchell" and are at present the only known signed panels. HOA 37⅛, WOA ⅝, DOA 19 inches. MESDA Research File S-4052. Private collection.

charge advertised by Polk. Compared to miniatures painted on ivory, profiles, even gold profiles on glass, were less expensive probably contributing to their popularity.

Charles Peale Polk was the nephew of the celebrated artist Charles Willson Peale. After the death of Polk's parents in the 1770s, he became a member of the Peale household. Peale felt that, with intelligence and persistence, talent in painting could be developed. Accordingly, he instructed the members of his household in drawing correctness. "After years of patient tutelage, Polk still painted with harshness of line and color, a stiff and awkward effort at precision."[10] Perhaps it is just this "stiff and awkward effort at precision" that makes the gold profiles so delightful.

Polk's use of a difficult medium requiring infinite patience and care in execution does show confidence on his part. Here the drawing correctness taught him by his uncle was put to good use. Polk never mentions using a profile machine, but his outlines do look as if that could have been the case. Seven of the profiles which have been photographed are round and measure either 3½ x 3½ inches, sight, or 4-3/16 x 4⅛ to 3/16 inches, sight. The rectangular one is 6⅜ x 4⅝ inches. The round profiles are framed in period wooden frames gilded and the rectangular one has a yellow pine frame, also gilded.

Polk's placement of the profile and his meticulous attention to details such as eye and lash delineation are good. His use of hatching and cross hatching to indicate costume detail completes the total effect. The subjects in Polk's engravings are representative of what we like to call the "solid middle class." Mrs. Norris (Fig. 2) wears an empire dress with a high neck and her hair is modestly covered with a soft beribboned cap. Her costume, complete with cap was typical of the dignified matron as opposed to the younger Milly Garnett (Fig. 3). Miss Garnett was engraved wearing her hair swept upward from the nape of her neck over the crown of her head and held in place a la mode with a decorative comb. The wisps of hair on the forehead were an attempt at curls — a simple type of coiffure compared to those in the Saint-Memin profiles."[11] The profiles of the men show no hair worn in the high fashion curly topknots; rather, the hair comes straight down from the crown in sharply delineated lines (Fig. 4). Two sets of the round profiles are conversational portraits of husbands and wives.

Figure 2. MRS. RICHARD NORRIS, nee Sarah Newley, Lancaster County, Virginia, 3½ x 3½ inches, sight. The black-painted surface of the glass shows considerable deterioration. MESDA Research File S-6780. Private collection.

Figure 3. MILLY GARNETT, c. 1810, 4-3/16 x 4⅛ inches, sight. Fortunately the break in the glass is to the right of the figure. In the profile engraving of her sister (Susan Wood, nee Garnett), the same type of name strip appears. The sisters' profiles are companion portraits. MESDA Research File S-4551. Private collection.

Figure 4. MR. RICHARD NORRIS, Lancaster County, Virginia, 3½ x 3½ inches, sight. The striped vest shows an emphasis on costume unusual in Polk's profiles. Signed. MESDA Research File S-6779. Private collection.

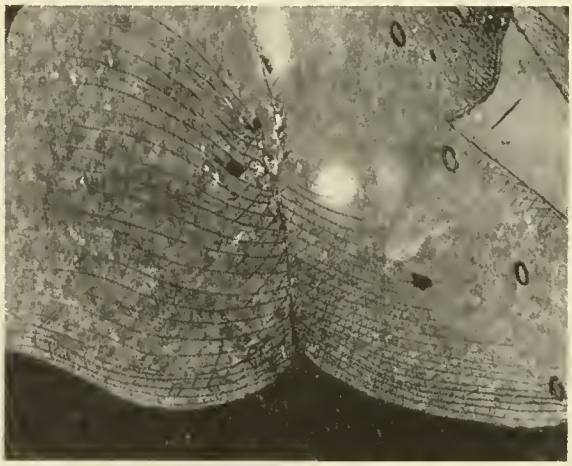


Figure 5. "C. P. Polk Fecit." This inscription appears on the profile of HENSHEA GILLIAM, Prince George County, Virginia. 6⅜ x 4⅝ inches, sight. This close-up also shows the hatching and cross-hatching used to distinguish the sleeve from the waistcoat. The black spots, center, and toward the right are due to loss of the gold leaf. MESDA Research File S-7169. Private collection.

Of the three signed profiles photographed by MESDA Research and the two signed ones owned by the American Antiquarian Society, all are men.

In these profiles we see an elegance in medium handled in a realistic style. Small, intimate drawings like these are close to the personal tradition of miniatures on ivory. As such, these little pieces of art must have been cherished by the sitters and members of their families. They reflect the importance of the individual in the new American republic — a focus on the person with minimal distractions of dress and accoutrements of social standing.

Mrs. Batson is a Senior Hostess at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts.

NOTES

1. Fillmore Norfleet, *Saint-Memin in Virginia: Portraits and Biographies* (Richmond, Virginia: The Dietz Press, 1942); p. 13 gives a good description of the physiognotrace.
2. Harold E. Dickson, *John Wesley Jarvis, American Painter 1780-1840* (New York: The New York Historical Society, 1949), p. 66.
3. Shown in a watercolor rendering in *The Smithsonian,* Vol. 6, No. 6, September 1975.
4. Alice Van Leer Carrick, "Novelties in Old American Profiles," *Antiques,* Vol. CIV, October 1928, p. 322.
5. *MESDA Research Index.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Dickson, *op. cit.,* p. 65.
8. William Dunlap, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States* (New York: George P. Scott & Co., Printers, 1834), Vol. II, p. 77.
9. *MESDA Research Index.*
10. Charles Coleman Sellers, *The Artist of the Revolution: The Early Life of Charles Willson Peale* (Hebron, Connecticut: Feather and Good, Publishers, 1939), p. 264.
11. Norfleet, *op. cit.,* p. 101. These photographs provide an interesting comparison in costuming and hair styles to some Saint-Memin subjects.

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